**LATINO LITERATURE**

**NOVEL SELECTIONS**

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| Enrique's Journey | Based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes, one for feature writing and another for feature photography, this astonishing story puts a human face on the ongoing debate about immigration reform in the United States. Now a beloved classic, this page-turner about the power of family is a popular text in classrooms and a touchstone for communities across the country to engage in meaningful discussions about this essential American subject.    Enrique’s Journey recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers. As Isabel Allende writes: “This is a twenty-first-century Odyssey. If you are going to read only one nonfiction book this year, it has to be this one.” |
| Locas: A Novel | A plunge into Los Angeles gang life, Locas is the story of two girls under the pressure of urban warfare. "Murray perfectly captures the patois and fury of the Mexican women of the East L.A. neighborhood Echo Park." -- Publishers Weekly |
| Jesse | In this new edition of his first young adult novel, Gary Soto paints a moving portrait of seventeen-year-old Jesse, who has left his parents' home to live with his older brother. These Mexican American brothers hope junior college will help them escape their heritage of tedious physical labor. Their struggles are humorous, true to life, and deeply affecting. Young adults will sympathize with the brothers as they come to terms with what is possible for each of them in an imperfect world. |
| Mexican Enough: My Life between the Borderlines | Growing up in a half-white, half-brown town and family in South Texas, Stephanie Elizondo Griest struggled with her cultural identity. Upon turning thirty, she ventured to her mother's native Mexico to do some root-searching and stumbled upon a social movement that shook the nation to its core.   Mexican Enough chronicles her adventures rumbling with luchadores (professional wrestlers), marching with rebel teachers in Oaxaca, investigating the murder of a prominent gay activist, and sneaking into a prison to meet with indigenous resistance fighters. She also visits families of the undocumented workers she befriended back home. Travel mates include a Polish thief, a Border Patrol agent, and a sultry dominatrix. Part memoir, part journalistic reportage, Mexican Enough illuminates how we cast off our identity in our youth, only to strive to find it again as adults -- and the lessons to be learned along the way. |
| Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina | In Hijas Americanas, author Rosie Molinary sheds new light on what it means to grow up Latina. Drawing upon her own experiences, as well as interviews and surveys collected from more than 500 Latina women, Molinary provides a powerful understanding of the inner conflicts and powerful triumphs of Latinas.  The women profiled in this book are Caribbean, Mexican, Central American, and South American. These first-, second-, and third-generation Latinas have all grappled with the experience of coming of age within not one but two cultures — that of the United States, and that of their familial homelands.  Hijas Americanas addresses experiences that are uniquely female and Latin, focusing on themes of body image, standards of beauty, ethnic identity, and sexuality. In doing so, Molinary gives voice to the struggles and successes of Latinas across racial, sexual, and cultural identities, emphasizing that the challenges inherent in growing up between two cultures can positively shape Latinas' lives. |
| The Last of the Menu Girls | Rocío Esquibel is a girl growing up in a Southern New Mexico town with her mother and sister. She defines her neighborhood by its trees—the willow, the apricot and the one they call the marking-off tree. Rocio knows she was born in the closet where she and her sister now take turns looking at the picture of Jesus whose eyes light up in the dark. But at night she enters a magical realm, and in her imaginary Blue Room, she can fly. At first she is a mesmerized observer of the lives of older girls and their boyfriends, but as she finds a job at the local hospital, and discovers a passion for drama and stories, Rocio begins to make her own choices in love and work.   Alive with the taste of tamales and the lyrical tang of the Esquibels’ talk,**The Last of the Menu Girls** becomes a rich celebration of Chicano culture, and a universal story of finding one’s way in the world. |
| He Forgot to Say Goodbye | Ramiro Lopez and Jake Upthegrove don't appear to have much in common. Ram lives in the Mexican-American working-class barrio of El Paso called "Dizzy Land." His brother is sinking into a world of drugs, wreaking havoc in their household. Jake is a rich West Side white boy who has developed a problem managing his anger. An only child, he is a misfit in his mother's shallow and materialistic world. But Ram and Jake do have one thing in common: They are lost boys who have never met their fathers. This sad fact has left both of them undeniably scarred and obsessed with the men who abandoned them. As Jake and Ram overcome their suspicions of each other, they begin to move away from their loner existences and realize that they are capable of reaching out beyond their wounds and the neighborhoods that they grew up in. Their friendship becomes a healing in a world of hurt.   San Antonio Express-News wrote, "Benjamin Alire S&#225;enz exquisitely captures the mood and voice of a community, a culture, and a generation"; that is proven again in this beautifully crafted novel. |
| The Tortilla Curtain | Topanga Canyon is home to two couples on a collision course. Los Angeles liberals Delaney and Kyra Mossbacher lead an ordered sushi-and-recycling existence in a newly gated hilltop community: he a sensitive nature writer, she an obsessive realtor. Mexican illegals Candido and America Rincon desperately cling to their vision of the American Dream as they fight off starvation in a makeshift camp deep in the ravine. And from the moment a freak accident brings Candido and Delaney into intimate contact, these four and their opposing worlds gradually intersect in what becomes a tragicomedy of error and misunderstanding. |
| La Linea | Miguel's life is just beginning. Or so he thinks. Fifteen-year-old Miguel leaves his rancho deep in Mexico to migrate to California across la linea, the border, in a debut novel of life-changing, cliff-hanging moments. But Miguel's carefully laid plans change suddenly when his younger sister Elena stows away and follows him. Together, Miguel and Elena endure hardships and danger on their journey of desperation and desire, loyalty and betrayal. An epilogue, set ten years after the events of the story, shows that you can't always count on dreams--even the ones that come true. |
| Burro Genius: A Memoir | From one of America's most beloved authors comes a raw and unnerving memoir that explores the transformation of an angry young man into the bestselling author we know today.  When Victor Villaseñor stood at the podium and looked at the group of teachers amassed before him, he became enraged. He had never spoken in public before. His mind was flooded with childhood memories filled with humiliation, misunderstanding, and abuse at the hands of his teachers. With his heart pounding, he began to speak of these incidents. To his disbelief, the teachers before him responded to his embittered recollection with a standing ovation. Many could not contain their own tears.  So begins a touching memoir of an extremely angry adolescent. Highly gifted and imaginative, Villaseñor coped with an untreated learning disability (he was finally diagnosed with extreme dyslexia at the age of forty-four) and the frustration he felt growing up Latino in an English-only American school system that had neither the cultural understanding nor the resources to deal with Hispanic students.  Often beaten by his teachers because he could not speak English, Villaseñor was made to feel ashamed about his heritage, and even questioned the core values prioritized by his tight-knit family. Villaseñor's dyslexia, and growing frustration over not fitting in, fueled his dream to one day become a writer. He is now considered one of the premier writers of our time.  With his signature passion, his gift as a storyteller, and his own incredible story, Villaseñor allows readers into the soul of a young life touched by insecurity yet encouraged by a personal sense of artistic destiny. Burro Genius, a complex and inspiring coming-of-age story, is certain to become an American classic. |
| Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood | The Hollywood where Sammy Santos lives is not one of glitz and glitter, but a barrio at the edge of a small New Mexico town. In the summer before his senior year, Sammy falls in love with the beautiful, independent, and intensely vulnerable Juliana. Sammy's chronicle of his senior year is both a love story and a litany of loss, the tale of his love not only for Juliana but for their friends, a generation from a barrio: tough, innocent, humorous, and determined to survive. |
| The Brothers Torres | Frankie Towers has always looked up to his older brother, Steve, and with good reason. Steve is a popular senior who always gets what he wants: girls, a soccer scholarship, and--lately--street cred. Frankie, on the other hand, spends his time shooting off fireworks with his best friend Zach, working at his parents' restaurant, and obsessing about his longtime crush, Rebecca Sanchez.   Frankie has reservations about Steve's crusade to win the respect of the local cholos. He doesn't think about them, though, until he gets into a fist fight John Dalton the richest, preppiest kid in his New Mexican high school, and longtime nemesis of Steve. After the fight, Steve takes Frankie under his wing and Frankie's social currency begins to rise. Thecholoswho used to ignore him start to recognize him; he even lands a date to Homecoming with Rebecca.   The situation with Dalton continues to simmer, and after another incident Steve is bent on retaliating. Frankie starts to think that his brother is taking this respect thing too far. He may have to choose between respecting his brother and respecting himself.  In an honest and humorous debut novel, Coert Voorhees uses a coming of age story to look at where loyalty ends and the self begins. |